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BILL HASLAM
Governor

To: Chancellors, Presidents, and Directors
Tennessee Institutions of Higher Education

From: Russ Deaton

Subject: 2016-17 Veteran Reconnect Grant Competition–
Announcement for Request for Proposals

Date: June 2, 2016

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is pleased to announce the release of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2016-17 Veteran Reconnect Grant Competition.

Grants of up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) will be available to eligible entities for a period of twenty-two (22) months to facilitate development and implementation of interventions focused on student veterans.

A Notice of Intent to Submit must be received by THEC no later than **4:30 pm Central Daylight Time** (5:30 pm Eastern Daylight Time) on **June 20, 2016**. Full proposals must be received by THEC no later than **4:30 pm Central Daylight Time** (5:30 pm Eastern Daylight Time) on **July 25, 2016**.

THEC looks forward to receiving your submissions.



**2016-2017
Veteran Reconnect
Grant Competition**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
and
GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION**

**NOTICE OF INTENT DUE
June 20, 2016**

**FINAL PROPOSALS DUE
July 25, 2016**

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I. General Information and Overview

General Information

In the wake of the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Tennessee has experienced a significant increase in the number of veterans enrolled in higher education. Serving these veterans, and ensuring their opportunities for success are maximized, is key to reaching the goals of the Drive to 55.

The Veteran Reconnect Grant Competition seeks to spur new efforts to serve student veterans, as well as sustain existing efforts. Selected institutions of higher education, from both the public and private non-profit sector, are encouraged to develop proposals that maximize the opportunity for the success of student veterans.

Last year, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) issued a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) to fund veteran support efforts at institutions of higher education. These grants were awarded to eleven (11) colleges and universities and represented the state's first focused efforts to encourage campus support of student veterans.

The 2016-17 Veteran Reconnect program seeks to build on those efforts and will provide individual grants of up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to institutions of higher education to facilitate development and implementation of interventions focused on student veterans. Grants will be awarded for a period of twenty-two (22) months.

This round of funding will focus on supporting campuses that have already demonstrated a clear commitment to serving veterans and seek to strengthen and support initiatives that will have a lasting impact on the student-veteran community.

An eligible institution of higher education includes any public or private, non-profit institution principally domiciled in Tennessee. Priority for funding will be provided to those proposals that incorporate a clear partnership with potential employers that result in internships and job placement opportunities for student veterans.

Veteran Reconnect Grant Competition grantees from the first round in 2015 are eligible to submit proposals for the 2016-17 grant. Current grantees must include a detailed description of the outcomes realized by their institution under the previous grant and explain how the institution's proposal for the new grant relates to ongoing efforts to support student veterans and maximize their success.

All applicants must demonstrate the current implementation of the following initiatives or include a detailed timeline for implementation:

- Development of a standardized system of tracking veterans and student veteran success data.
- Formation of a campus veteran success committee. *Institutions that currently have a committee in place must describe and certify these efforts as being underway.*

Examples of other acceptable grant activities include the following:

- Development and implementation of a campus veteran success program that includes:
 - a) training for faculty and staff; and
 - b) a specific orientation program for incoming student veterans.
- Hiring of a new staff member devoted solely to the activities of a student veteran coordinator, or formally assigning these grant responsibilities to current staff.

***Note:* Institutions hiring new staff for their program must certify that grant funds will not be commingled with payment for existing staff member duties. These funds are dedicated and must be used exclusively for execution of the new duties outlined in the institution's submitted proposal.**

- Other veteran-specific interventions as identified by the campus. These interventions must be clearly supported by available research as effective strategies.

II. Proposal Specifications

Applications will respond to the following criteria and present a detailed plan for achieving the outlined objectives.

Section 1. Program Need – 25 points

Proposals will include a thorough overview of the current state of veteran enrollment at the institution and specifically identify the challenges facing student veterans on the campus. Institutions must outline the proposed program/intervention to address those challenges and demonstrate how creation of the program/intervention will assist the state's future labor needs.

Essential components:

- *Campus-specific data demonstrating the need for action-* provide data regarding number of enrolled student veterans.
- *Outline of program/intervention-* briefly describe the components of the proposed program.
- *Clear linkages between grant activities and program needs-* clearly illustrate how the proposed grant project is directly linked to addressing the needs and deficits of student veterans. Include all relevant research that supports the proposed intervention.
- *Demonstrated commitment by the institution-* describe how the institution has already invested in veteran success; outline programs and resources that have been deployed.

Optional Priority Area:

- Institutions partnering with a local employer will receive a five (5) point preference on their submission. The proposed partnership must include a commitment from the employer to institute an internship or work-based learning program for student veterans or a hiring agreement for student veterans that commits to a specified number of full-time positions. A letter of support from the employer is mandatory.

Section 2. Program Plan – 30 points

Each proposal will include a detailed description of the planned project. Applicants should include a project abstract no longer than half a page. This will be used to describe funded proposals in publications and on THEC's website.

Essential components:

- *Detailed project timeline and overview-* provide a month-by-month overview of the critical convenings, activities, and actions that will comprise the project.
- *Measurable objectives for each phase of the project-* detail the metrics that will be utilized throughout the project to track success.
- *Project governance and accountability plan-* clearly describe the plan for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure; identify a project director; identify members of the mandatory veteran success committee that will maintain oversight throughout the project period.

Section 3. Budget Plan – 25 points

Proposals will include a detailed financial plan and a completed state budget template.

Essential component:

- *Clear alignment between funding request and grant activities-* detailed narrative of how each component of the grant budget supports the goals and stated outcomes of the program.

Section 4. Sustainability – 20 points

Proposals will include a commitment to and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the grant period.

Essential component:

- *Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the funding period-* describe how the work and services supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period.

III. Submission Guidelines and Timeline

A *Notice of Intent to Submit* must be transmitted via email to **brett.gipson@tn.gov** no later than **4:30 PM (CDT) on June 20, 2016**. The *Notice of Intent to Submit* must follow the format included in Appendix D and include:

- Higher Education Institution
- Project Manager / Point of Contact
- Local Employer Partner(s), if applicable

Final proposals must be received in hard copy at THEC offices by **July 25, 2016, 4:30 PM (CDT).***

***THIS IS NOT A POSTMARK DATE. SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DEADLINE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

RFP Timeline:

- **June 20, 2016**
4:30 pm (CDT) deadline for *Notice of Intent to Submit*
- **July 25, 2016**
4:30 pm (CDT) deadline for receipt of all proposals at THEC
- **Early August 2016**
Grant recommendations approved by THEC executive director; applicants notified of selection
- **August 8, 2016**
Mandatory project director meeting
- **September 1, 2016**
Projects commence

IV. Grant Application Procedures

Submit in hard copy one (1) original signed proposal and seven (7) copies of the application to:

**Tennessee Veteran Reconnect Program
Attn: Brett Gipson
Tennessee Higher Education Commission
404 James Robertson Parkway, Suite 1900
Nashville, TN 37243-0830**

The application must include:

- Cover Sheet (Appendix A)
- Table of Contents
- Project abstract- no longer than half a page
- Program Proposal - This section should be double-spaced, with one-inch margins.
(*Note: Maximum document length is ten (10) pages, excluding the cover sheet, data list, abstract, table of contents, and budget.*)
- Budget (Appendix B)

Notification

Once each proposal has been received, a confirmation notice will be sent to each project director. **If you do not receive your confirmation notice within one (1) week of submitting your proposal, please call 615-253-5335.** It is the sole responsibility of the submitting institution to verify receipt of the proposal.

One week after the proposal deadline, THEC will post all received proposals on the THEC website accessible at www.tn.gov/thec. **If you have submitted a proposal but it is not listed, contact Brett Gipson at 615-253-5335.**

Review and Award Process

Grant proposals will be submitted to THEC and reviewed by a selection committee.

Selection committee members will be provided their assigned proposals prior to the selection committee convening and will score proposals utilizing a standardized rubric. Proposals will be reviewed individually and scoring may be done both prior to the meeting or during collective group discussions. During the selection committee proceedings, the scores assigned to proposals by each reviewer will be averaged, with the selection committee making awards from highest to lowest score until funds are exhausted. The committee reserves the right to make deviation from scoring order to address geographical parity and ensure representation of each Grand Division.

V. Legal Information

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that federally assisted programs be free of discrimination. Should you feel you have been discriminated against, contact your local Title VI representatives. The Title VI coordinator at THEC is Scott Sloan (615-741-7571).

Funding

Funder reserves the right to fund a proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to reject any of the proposals responding to the RFP, and to re-issue the RFP and accept new proposals if doing so is in the best interest of the State of Tennessee.

All costs incurred in preparation of the proposal shall be borne by the Applicant. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable from grant funds. THEC reserves the right to withhold funding if at any point the program is not adhering to federal and state requirements or the goals and objectives declared in this RFP. THEC staff reserve the right to attend any project activity or meeting to ensure the fidelity of this program, and conduct regular monitoring of the project.

NAME OF INSTITUTION

(Minimum 18 point font)

Veteran Reconnect Grant Program

Project Director Name, Title

Mailing Address

Director's Telephone

Director's E-mail Address

Funding requested:

\$ _____

President/Director of Higher Education Institution

Project Director

Appendix B – BUDGET

GRANT BUDGET				
Veteran Reconnect Grant				
The grant budget line-item amounts below shall be applicable only to expenses incurred during the following				
Applicable Period: BEGIN: September 1, 2016 END : June 30, 2018				
POLICY 03 Object Line-item Reference	EXPENSE OBJECT LINE-ITEM CATEGORY ¹	GRANT CONTRACT	GRANTEE PARTICIPATION	TOTAL PROJECT
1, 2	Salaries, Benefits & Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00
4, 15	Professional Fee, Grant & Award ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Supplies, Telephone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications	0.00	0.00	0.00
11, 12	Travel, Conferences & Meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00
13	Interest ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
14	Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Specific Assistance To Individuals	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	Depreciation ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	Other Non-Personnel ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	Capital Purchase ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
22	Indirect Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00
24	In-Kind Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
25	GRAND TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Each expense object line-item shall be defined by the Department of Finance and Administration Policy 03, *Uniform Reporting Requirements and Cost Allocation Plans for Subrecipients of Federal and State Grant Monies, Appendix A.* (posted on the Internet at: www.state.tn.us/finance/act/documents/policy3.pdf).

² Applicable detail follows this page if line-item is funded.

APPENDIX B – BUDGET (cont.)**GRANT BUDGET LINE-ITEM DETAIL:**

PROFESSIONAL FEE, GRANT & AWARD	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

OTHER NON-PERSONNEL	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

CAPITAL PURCHASE	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

APPENDIX B – BUDGET (cont.)

GRANT BUDGET LINE-ITEM DETAIL

Line 1 Salaries And Wages

On this line, enter compensation, fees, salaries, and wages paid to grant program staff.

Line 2 Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes

Enter (a) the organization's contributions to pension plans and programs such as health, life, and disability insurance; and (b) the organization's portion of payroll taxes such as social security and Medicare taxes and unemployment and workers' compensation insurance.

Line 4 Professional Fees

Enter the organization's fees to outside professionals, consultants, part-time staff, and personal-service contractors. *(A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)*

Line 5 Supplies

Enter the organization's expenses for office supplies.

Line 6 Telephone

Enter the organization's expenses for telephone, cellular phones, beepers, telegram, FAX, E-mail, telephone equipment maintenance, and other related expenses.

Line 7 Postage And Shipping

Enter the organization's expenses for postage, messenger services, overnight delivery, and outside mailing service fees.

Line 8 Occupancy

Not applicable.

Line 9 Equipment Rental And Maintenance

Enter the organization's expenses for renting and maintaining computers, copiers, postage meters, other office equipment, and other equipment, except for telephone, truck, and automobile expenses.

Line 10 Printing And Publications

Enter the organization's expenses for producing printed materials, purchasing books and publications for the direct use of the organization. (Printed materials in support of conferences and meetings should be reported on Line 12, and printed materials and books purchased specifically for individuals should be reported on Line 14.)

Line 11 Travel

Enter the organization's expenses for faculty and staff travel, including transportation, meals and lodging, and per diem payments.

Line 12 Conferences And Meetings

Enter the organization's expenses for conducting or attending meetings, conferences, and conventions.

Line 13 Interest

Not Applicable.

APPENDIX B – BUDGET (cont.)

Line 14 Insurance

Not Applicable.

Line 15 Grants And Awards

Enter the organization's awards, grants, subsidies, and other pass-through expenditures to individuals and to other organizations, including travel, transportation, meals and lodging, stipend payments and equipment allowances. *(A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)*

Line 16 Specific Assistance to Individuals

Not Applicable.

Line 17 Depreciation

Not Applicable.

Line 18 Other Nonpersonnel Expenses

NOTE: Expenses reportable on lines 1 through 17 should not be reported in an additional expense category on line 18. Enter the organization's allowable expenses for advertising, promotions, and, recruiting. Include the organization's and employees' membership dues in associations and professional Include testing fees for software licenses, testing, permits, registrations, etc. *(A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)*

Line 20 Reimbursable Capital Purchases

Enter the organization's purchases of fixed assets and other purchases with a minimum life expectancy of one year. *(A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)*

Line 22 Administrative Expenses (Indirect Cost)

This amount is intended to cover costs associated with administrative functions including providing the required project reports, financial information, and information to support project evaluation.

Line 24 In-Kind Expenses

In-kind Expenses is for Grantee reporting of the value of contributed resources applied to the program.

Line 25 Total Expenses

The sum of all grant expenses goes on this line.

Appendix C – SCORING RUBRIC

Scoring Rubric

Proposal Program Director (Name, Title): _____

Institution: _____

Local Employer Partnerships for 5-point preference? Yes____ No____

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
<p><u>Section 1. Program Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there campus-specific demographic data demonstrating the need for action? - Are there clear linkages between grant activities and local needs? - Is proposal aligned with Drive to 55 goals? <p>Do veteran enrollment trends support this investment?</p> <p><u>Scoring Range</u></p> <p>1 – Proposal is not aligned with goals of the RFP.</p> <p>15 – Proposal states goals and connects with priorities but lacks detail in how planned activities serve student veterans.</p> <p>25– Proposal provides detailed and clear connections between campus needs and planned activities.</p>	25		
<p><u>Section 2. Program Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is a detailed project timeline and overview provided? - Are there measurable objectives for each phase of the project? - Is a project governance and accountability plan clearly presented? - Will student veterans be served efficiently? - Does the plan offer new, innovative approaches to supporting student veterans? - Are employer relationships established and documented in the proposal? <p><u>Scoring Range</u></p> <p>1 – Program plan does not contain an organized overview or lacks sufficient timeline elements.</p> <p>15– A program plan is presented but lacks sufficient details regarding identified objectives, accountability, information, or student veteran interventions and services.</p> <p>30 – Program plan as submitted provides a viable and organized approach and includes all required elements.</p>	30		

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
<p><u>Section 3. Budget Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are budget requests detailed and justified throughout the summary? - Are projected expenditures consistent with the program's stated goals? - Does the budget as presented provide a responsible and effective utilization of grant funds? <p><u>Scoring Range</u></p> <p>1 – Budget is incomplete and/or unreasonable given the scope of the proposal.</p> <p>15 – Budget lacks sufficient detail but expenditures seem to be reasonable given the scope of the proposal.</p> <p>25 – Budget is complete with sufficient justifications and detail listed for each line item.</p>	25		
<p><u>Section 4. Sustainability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a detailed plan for sustaining the program services and student resources beyond the grant funding period? - Will funded activities offer student veteran benefits beyond the grant period? <p><u>Scoring Range</u></p> <p>1 – Sustainability plan is incomplete and/or unreasonable given the scope of the proposal.</p> <p>10 – Sustainability plan lacks sufficient detail but plan seems to be reasonable given the scope of the proposal.</p> <p>20 – Sustainability plan is complete with sufficient detail provided for proper investment of resources.</p>	20		

Appendix C – SCORING RUBRIC (cont.)

Total Score: _____ (out of 100)

Reviewer Signature: _____
Name Date

Overall Comments:

Veteran Reconnect – Notice of Intent to Submit

Name of Higher Education Institution:

Contact Person with name, title, phone, address, and email information:

Local Employer Partner(s), if applicable:

Proposed funding requested:

Please return via email by 4:30 PM (CDT) on June 20, 2016

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